

VZCZCXRO7090
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHPS #0594/01 2121554
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 311554Z JUL 07
FM USOFFICE PRISTINA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7582
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1240
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHFMISS/AFSOUTH NAPLES IT
RHMFISS/CDR TF FALCON
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEPGEA/CDR650THMIGP SHAPE BE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RUFOANA/USNIC PRISTINA SR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRISTINA 000594

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/ACE, DRL, PRM, SCRS, NSC FOR BRAUN,
USUN FOR DREW SCHUFLETOWSKI, USOSCE FOR STEVE STEGER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/31/2017

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [KCRS](#) [YI](#) [KV](#) [UNMIK](#) [SENV](#) [PHUM](#)

SUBJECT: KOSOVO: AT DONOR URGING, UNMIK COMMITS TO CLOSING
LEAD-CONTAMINATED ROMA CAMP

Classified By: COM Tina S. Kaidanow for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: UNMIK committed to closing the Cesmin Lug Roma camp, which CDC has consistently maintained is unsafe for human habitation. In a July 23 meeting with UN, USOP and donor representatives, PDSRSG Schook gave the instruction that alternative sites be found for the current Cesmin Lug residents, and then the camp be emptied. Preferably this would be done through an awareness campaign, but it might require the cessation of services to the camp and -- in extremis -- forced eviction. UNMIK's senior official for northern Kosovo opposed closure, arguing that the Roma should be allowed to remain in their homes and that any eviction of Roma would lead to Albanians pressing property claims in northern Kosovo. We said that the USOP position reflected the CDC's report, particularly the conclusion that any additional U.S. assistance to support the continued existence of Cesmin Lug would be unacceptable and even immoral given the serious health risks posed to inhabitants of the camp. End summary.

12. (SBU) At USOP suggestion, PDSRSG Schook called a meeting on July 23 to review issues related to displaced Roma in northern Mitrovica. In attendance were UNMIK's Regional Representative for Mitrovica Gerard Gallucci, director of UNMIK's Department of Civil Administration Anil Vasisht, head of UNMIK's local governance unit Leonid Markaryan, and UNMIK emergency planning officer Neville Fouche. DPO, USAID Program Officer and POL/ECON Officer represented USOP.

13. (C) After consulting with CDC, we turned over a draft copy of its recent report on Cesmin Lug, one of the two camps currently housing displaced Roma, and seriously contaminated by lead. Based on CDC's findings, USOP advocated the closure of Cesmin Lug and the relocation to the inhabitants to Osterode, a site just across the street that CDC believes is far safer. Fouche said that there is room in Osterode for the inhabitants of Cesmin Lug, but noted that some 80 new residents have moved in since space was vacated by Roma moving to the Mahala.

14. (C) UNMIK's Regional Representative for Mitrovica Gerard

Gallucci opposed the closure of Cesmin Lug. He said that his fear was a precedent could be set by evicting the Roma, claiming that it could lead to Albanians demanding that the authorities use eviction as a means of resolving property disputes in the north. Schook said that an eviction based on a compelling public health concern was different from similar steps taken as a result of a property ownership suit. Gallucci also maintained that it would be immoral to evict Roma from their homes, adding that all of the Mitrovica area was lead-contaminated.

15. (C) Schook noted that UNMIK's efforts would be undermined if more Roma back-filled vacated residences in Cesmin Lug. Fouche said it would be preferable to move the community en masse, razing the camp immediately afterwards. Schook agreed that that was a preferable solution. He maintained that the UN should make an effort to prepare new space for the group in either Osterode, the Roma Mahalla, or elsewhere. If that is done (in consultation with the UN's Office of Legal Affairs), he asserted, the closure of the camp should proceed in one of three ways. The preferable option would be to provide an alternative and thorough education, obtaining the buy-in of the residents to depart. If that fails, the remaining UN services to the camp should be terminated. Gallucci insisted that he would do this only on written instructions from the PDSRSG. Finally, although forced eviction is not a desired means to close the camp, Schook, asserted, it needs to remain as an option of last resort.

16. (C) USOP representatives agreed with Schook's roadmap for closing the camp. Based on CDC's conclusion that the provision of further aid to Cesmin Lug would pose serious health risks to inhabitants and could even be considered "immoral," DPO noted that USOP would oppose any new

PRISTINA 00000594 002 OF 002

assistance to support the continued existence of the camp. He added that we would also carefully examine any assistance whose unintended consequence was the encouragement of residents to remain in Cesmin Lug. DPO promised that USOP would work with UNMIK's public affairs section to ensure that the message gets out that this is above all a critical public health issue. Like the UN, we have no desire to forcibly evict the Roma from the camp. However, that might prove to be the best -- and necessary -- way to address this issue years after it should have been resolved.

18. (C) Comment: Our policy will remain to push for the early and permanent closure of Cesmin Lug. Fouche later told us that it could take 40 days to achieve this objective. We will follow developments in and continue to urge UNMIK to take resolute action. Based on UNMIK's plan forward, we will make further assessments about the most advantageous use of our assistance funds on behalf of the Roma community.
KAIDANOW